Wellington SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Bullying is a breach of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. Wellington School aims to provide an environment where everyone is treated fairly, rights are respected and children can access all the opportunities and support they need, when they need it. It aims to create an environment where bullying cannot thrive and is not seen as a normal part of growing up. The School will seek to embed an ethos of mutual respect, responsibility, resolution and support, in order to make its children and young people feel safe, included and respected and to ensure their wellbeing needs are being met.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of the school's anti-bullying policy are:

- to ensure that every pupil in Wellington grows up free from bullying and able to develop respectful, responsible and confident relationships with others
- to provide pupils with the skills, strategies and resilience to prevent and/or respond to bullying appropriately
- to know who can help them and what this help will look like
- to demonstrate the school's commitment to challenge prejudice-based bullying

This will ensure that adults working with all pupils in school, from Nursery to S6, will follow a consistent and coherent approach in dealing with and preventing bullying.

A Definition of Bullying

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online. (respectme, in "Respect for All" national guidelines 2017)

Types of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can affect a person's sense of agency and affect them physically and emotionally, and although the bullying behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time through other behaviours or the fear of the bullying behaviour continuing.

Bullying behaviour can typically fall into two categories: face to face or online bullying, or it may fit into both categories. The school will treat all incidents of online bullying in the same way as face to face bullying.

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened
- Being hit, tripped, pushed and kicked
- Having belongings taken or damaged
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you
- Sending abusive messages, pictures or images on social media, online gaming platforms or phone
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be

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Prejudice-based Bullying

Bullying behaviour may be a result of prejudice-based views, beliefs and fears, leading to the dislike and hatred of individuals and groups; this is called prejudice-based bullying. It can be based on any characteristic or characteristics unique to a child or young person's identity or circumstance and some of these are protected by law under the Equality Act 2010. Prejudice-based bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudices, which, if not addressed, could lead to behaviour or language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or directed towards disability or faith, in nature.

Prejudice-based bullying behaviour has no place in Wellington School. The school will seek to address prejudicial attitudes that may be behind the bullying behaviour.

The nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act (2010).

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Advice should be sought from the Assistant Head (Pastoral) if a young person or adult believes a specific crime has been committed, such as a hate crime which is defined in law as motivated by malice or ill-will related to one of the above protected characteristics. Further guidance may be requested by the School from external agencies where appropriate.

Online Bullying sometimes referred to as cyberbullying

Online bullying can be defined as the use of ICT, particularly smartphones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Online bullying differs in several different ways from face to face bullying and, as a result, the boundaries between home and school often become blurred, resulting in the school becoming involved even though the online bullying has taken place outside of school.

Online bullying will be treated seriously regardless of whether it takes place at home or at school. Online bullying can include:

- Threats and intimidation
- Harassment or cyberstalking e.g. sending unwanted texts or instant messages
- Vilification/defamation
- Exclusion or peer rejection
- Impersonation
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images or manipulation

Some online bullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but the school recognises that some incidents of online bullying are unintentional and the result of individuals simply not thinking about the consequences of their actions. Individual incidents will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

In online bullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators, by passing on images designed to humiliate, or by taking part in polls or discussion groups. These bystanders or 'accessories' will be dealt with in the same way as those who instigate the bullying behaviour, as participating in such an activity can have severe and distressing consequences.

In all instances of online bullying, the person being subjected to bullying behaviour will be given advice on steps they can take to avoid recurrence. In PSE and Health and Well-being lessons digital literacy, including cyber resilience and internet safety, is embedded in the curriculum.

Steps will be taken to identify the person responsible for the online bullying and normal sanctions applied. In addition, if pupils have breached the Acceptable Use Policy, which they have signed, technology-specific sanctions may also be applied.

When It s Not Bullying

Children and young people will often fall out and disagree with each other as they learn how to form and build relationships. This is a normal part of growing up and most pupils will have the ability to bounce back from this type of behaviour. It is important for young people to develop resilience in building relationships and discussion related to how they feel about this will be encouraged and facilitated by staff.

Sometimes a person can attempt to exhibit bullying behaviour towards another person but it has no impact – in this case an individual has not been bullied but the behaviour needs to be challenged appropriately and should not be ignored.

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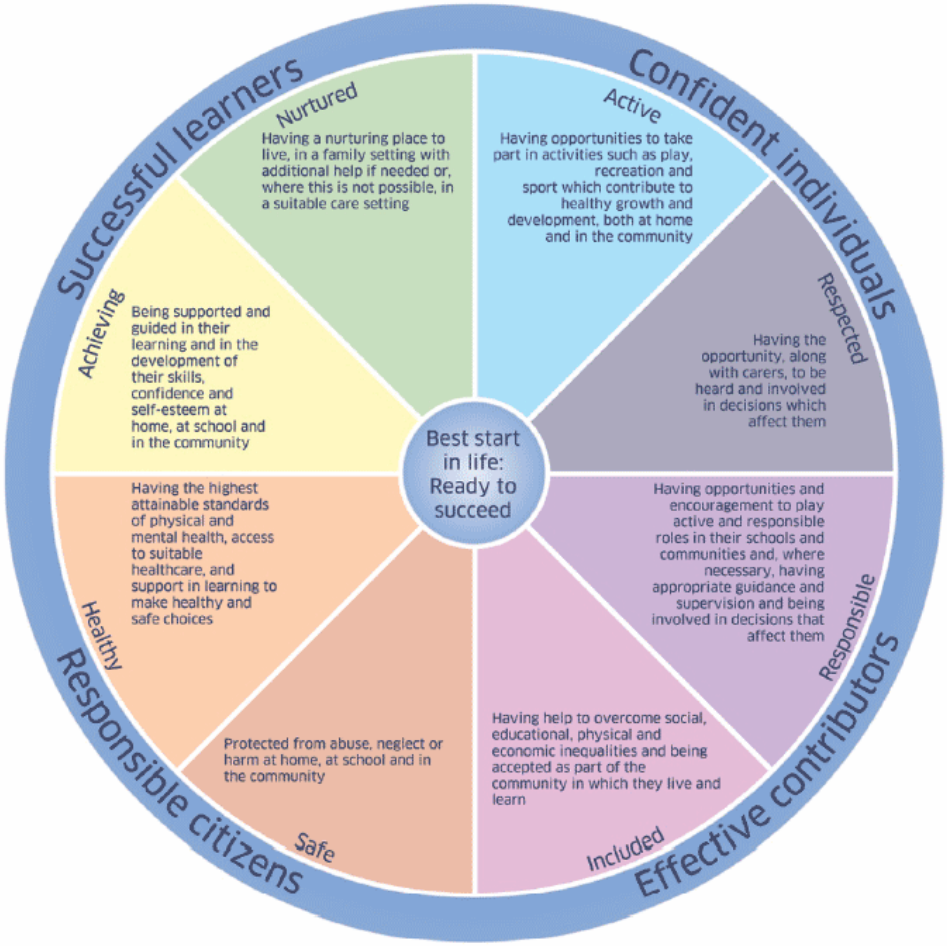
The Impact of Bullying

Bullying can have significant short term and long term effects on a child or young person's physical and mental health and well-being. It affects individuals, families and takes place in the context of relationships. Bullying impacts on a person's sense of agency; this is defined as their capacity to self-manage, their feelings of being in control and their ability to take action. It affects their school attendance and attainment. It affects their mental health and wellbeing. The School will use the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators (below) to assess the needs of the child or young person being subjected to bullying behaviour and the child engaging in bullying behaviour in order to provide targeted support, if required.



In Scotland, bullying is not a criminal offence; however, the school has a duty to ensure that pupils being subjected to bullying behaviour and those engaging in any bullying behaviour related to a Protected Characteristic are treated with the same level of seriousness as other forms of bullying.

The school will not seek to criminalise any child or young person engaging in bullying behaviour, however, any bullying behaviour which strays into criminality such as hate crime, assault, or sexual harassment will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

The effects of bullying should not be minimised, as such behaviour can leave people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated, and can have a devastating and lifelong impact. Labelling children and young people as 'bullies' or 'victims' can be disempowering and unhelpful in supporting them to change behaviour or recover from the impact of bullying behaviour. Our focus will always be on helping pupils to understand what has happened or what they did and the impact that it has had, with the emphasis on promotion of positive behaviour instead.

Monitoring of potentially vulnerable pupils groups of pupils

The school believes that early intervention is the key to the prevention of bullying behaviour. In the Nursery, the pupils are known well by their Key Worker, who will alert the the Head of the Junior School and the Assistant Head (Pastoral) to any pupils who give cause for concern.

In the Junior School, the Class Teacher and Playground Supervisors play a large part in monitoring pupil behaviour. There is close dialogue between all teachers, playground supervisors, the Head of the Junior School and the Assistant Head (Pastoral) regarding any pupils who give cause for concern.

New pupils making the transition to Wellington School from other schools are monitored closely throughout the first six weeks in school. In the Senior School, this includes a New Pupil Interview with Year Head, who will make contact with parents within the first six weeks and to ensure that any areas of concern are identified. The First Level Guidance system allows the Form Tutor to get to know their pupils well over a long period of time; this allows for close routine monitoring of their wellbeing at all stages.

Encouraging a telling environment

Young people will not tell for a variety of reasons. Mainly they are worried about the subsequent reaction of the person engaging in bullying behaviour. They are naturally fearful of retribution and are also often confused in their attitude towards the bully, who can be a dynamic, fun and attractive classmate. Once pupils know that telling will result in a fair resolution they will trust adults with information about bullying behaviour. It is important that the traditional "tale telling" myth is destroyed. A telling environment is one where all members recognise that they have responsibilities to the other members in the group and if they are aware of bullying they have a duty to tell.

Wellington is committed to the development of a safe environment where pupils can 'tell' without fear of reprisal.

Parents and pupils should promote the key message that:

- If you are being subjected to bullying behaviour, tell someone. Don't suffer in silence.
- If you see someone being subjected to bullying behaviour, tell a teacher immediately.
- Don't think it's OK to be a 'bystander' – this can give the impression that bullying is an acceptable form of behaviour.
- Be an 'upstander' – let other pupils and adults know immediately if you see a behaviour that is unacceptable

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Investigating, dealing with, recording and monitoring incidents of face to face and online bullying

The main aims of intervention in an alleged or actual incident of bullying are to:

make any pupil subject to bullying behaviour feel safe and provide support if necessary
encourage better behaviour from any pupil engaging in bullying behaviour, bystanders and/or colluders

All incidents of face to face and online bullying are recorded and monitored. In cases of persistent bullying, monitoring will continue throughout the session.

Parents/carers will be informed and involved at as early a stage as appropriate in order to foster and strengthen a co-operative ethos. This will be done by telephone or email and parents may be asked to make an appointment to come into school to meet with the designated member of staff.

Parents/carers will be:

told about the steps which will be taken to try to resolve the incident.
given progress reports by telephone or email.
advised of disciplinary action to be taken (if any).

Disciplinary steps will be taken if the bullying behaviour is persistent and the attitude and behaviour of the child or young person engaging in the bullying behaviour does not change. Please refer to the Behaviour and Discipline policy for further information.

Wellington School:

Will keep the child affected by the bullying behaviour at the centre and recognises that not all pupils who are reported as engaging in bullying behaviour towards others are always deliberately intending to hurt.

- Will not label pupils or staff as 'bullies' or 'victims' during any discussion with those persons involved in an alleged or actual incident of bullying.
- Will ensure that all information sharing is relevant, proportionate and appropriate and that consent is sought, where appropriate.
- Will consult children and young people and take into account their views.
- Will consult parents.
- Adopts a restorative approach which acknowledges that we work best when part of a community and that we must be aware of how that community works and the responsibilities we share as part of that community. Restorative Justice puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. It promotes telling the truth, acknowledging harm and creating accountability.
- Adopts a solutions oriented approach, working with the children and young people, their parents and carers, and colleagues, in order to find solutions.
- Adopts a nurturing approach in order to repair relationships, promote recovery and develop resilience.
- Record and monitor all alleged and actual incidents of bullying in line with Data Protection guidelines.
- Will ensure that staff and volunteers are trained and supported to deal with incidents of bullying and promote recovery.
- Will value and celebrate diversity through a range of curricular and extra-curricular experiences and through its ethos. All staff and pupils are treated with dignity and respect.

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How to report an incident of bullying

Designated members of staff for dealing with alleged or actual incidents of bullying in the Senior school are:

Mrs L. Bradley, Head of P7
Mrs L. Hunter, Head of S1 & S2
Mrs N. Craig, Head of S3 & S4
Mr A. Byers, Head of S5 and S6
Mr A. McDougall, Assistant Head (Pastoral) and Child Protection Co-ordinator
Mrs M. Windows, Deputy Head and Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator

and in the Nursery and Junior school are:

Mrs S. MacRae, Head of the Junior School and Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator

An incident of bullying, however, can be reported to any member of staff who will direct this to the appropriate person for further investigation.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

A McDougall
Novemeber 2023